

# LETTER from a Citizen of LONDON to his Friend in the COUNTRY

Must number amongst your underserved Favours, your sending for my thoughts concerning the Request of the Citizens of London, in Common-Hall assembled, to their Representatives in Parliament. I will not by Excuses, tho' I might very justly, unqualify my self for the performance of your Commands. You have so often given a sort of Satisfaction in perusing my Scrawls, that it is titter for me readily to say whatsoever you exact, than either to suspect your Candour, or dispute my own abilities.

I have not so little sense of Liberty, nor have I so little reflected how it was preserved under the Roman Commonwealth, by the People's having, of right, a great share in all things that were there transacted, as to think it improper for the Common-Hall of our Metropolis to interest themselves, as far as by Law they may, in our Publick affairs upon every occasion, that seems to them important. I know their Wealth, and how considerable many of them are. I remember likewise that had not the City interposed and invigorated the Parliament in the late times, notwithstanding that they were so generally well inclin'd, they had done but half their Reformation-work; they had never secur'd their Rights and Liberties from the Designs of the Malignants of those Days.

But after I have hinted all this in the behalf of those worthy Citizens that met at Guildhall upon the twenty ninth of the last Month, yet I know that they themselves will allow that they are capable of being sometimes misguided, that they are not Infallible in their Conjectures, and that it is possible that their Zeal may fly at too mean a quarry.

The Assassination was so unnatural to our Climate, To contrary to the innate Bravery of English minds, and so fenced against by our Laws, that all the Burroughs, Cities, and Shires of England, as well as the City of London, have long since expressed their abhorrence of it.

But when the true Sources of the decay of our Trade and Credit are to be inquired after, I am much afraid that that inconsiderable Parry of Men, the Non-jurors, will be found as little able to bring such mighty Mischiefs about, as all thinking Men are sure they are, by their interest, to bring home their King. Indeed the Cavaliers formerly were a very Large and Comprehensive Body, included the whole Church of England, and most of the Nobility and Gentry; but for the Non-Jurors amongst us, they have not four hundred Clergy-men, not ten Lawyers, nor ten Noblemen; amongst Traders and the Yeomanry scarce any, and but few amongst the Gentry. They are, if any ever was so, a Sect so small for number that they need not be fear'd, nor regarded, and being incapable of all Places of trust and Power, are thereby incapacitated for doing any great mischiefs. They may bring themselves into danger, but cannot us. And therefore 'tis to be wish'd that the Citizens may not be put upon a false Scent. This Game is not like that of the old Cavaliers and Malignants, and a Man may therefore Reasonably suspect that the very Men who have been able to embarrasse things, and who for their own private ends have done it, have under-hand misguided the Zeal of the Common-Hall to call them off from the pursuit of the true destroyers of their Countrey.

I will, Sir, to you recollect some few of those Steps which I have observed have been taken to destroy us, and in which the Non-Juring handful could have no part. I don't set them down to purge that sort of Men, but that I may lay before you the truth of things.

To begin with the nature of our War. Was it not our interest to have had our part Naval? Would not a Naval War have rather encreased than diminished the number of our Seamen? Would not half our Taxes have built such a Fleet as the World never nor could resist? would not almost all the Expences of a Sea-War circulated at home? and consequently could such a War have so exhausted us in such a space of time? was there any other necessity to give time for, and prolong, the Insurrections in Ireland, but only that there might be a pretence to raise Land Forces? would not a good Fleet, and the Militia made (as it might have been) serviceable, have secured us against the whole World? We ought to have taken the whole Naval part upon our selves, and not to have transported one Man, or one Farthing, into Foreign Countries, and had, we warred in this manner Navally, tho' the French should have over-run the Dutch upon the Continent, yet we should not have need to have been afraid of theirs and the French Fleet joyned together. We can never be entirely safe till we are strong enough to beat them both at Sea. Had we acted only Navally we should have been so long before this time, and then we had had no need to be solicitous who has made, and who are likely to make a separate Peace.

But



But in the next place let us see how the Fleet we have, is managed. It has been indeed managed by an amphibious sort of Creatures, called Land-Admirals chosen rather to look after the House of Commons than our Ships. How have these Admirals (who have learnt to sail, as the Vertuosi teach Men to swim upon a Table) managed our Fleet? They have even Mann'd them as they could; because they have Officer'd them from *Locket's* and not from *Wapping*, amongst the *Beaux* and not the *Tarpaulins*. But to speak the Truth the Admirals, Officers, and Orders are much alike. The Folly, the Ignorance, the Corruption and Knavery of that Board has so long appear'd gross; that Commission has been so long and so palpably irreclaimable that honest Mr. *Sacheverell*, Sir *Michael Wharton*, Sir *Richard Onslow* and others have one after another quitted it. They were too good Patriots to sit and see the very Walls and Fortifications of this Island, and their Country, mouldring and tumbling down under their Administration. They soon saw it was not work for any but such as had been bred up through all the Gradations of the Employment, and yet they found their Fellow-Commissioners would neither be instructed by, nor make use of, those brave old Men who were the Seamen of the late times, and offer'd to serve under this Government. How few of Mr. *Sacheverell's* List of Wealthy Captains, that would have serv'd without pay, were taken in, is a Story that will never be forgotten, nor perhaps forgiven to the Managers of our Admiralty.

We will now come to our Trade. Have not all Advantages been given to the *Dutch* to undermine it? Have not Embargoes been laid upon our Merchants whilst the *Dutch* have gone, and fill'd all Foreign Markets? Have not our Merchants been unsupplied with Convoys, and been *Huff'd* by the Land-Admirals when they have complained of it, I appeal here to many of those honest Citizens who subscribed this very Request for the truth of what I say, Was not the Committee of Trade that the Parliament design'd last Sessions oppos'd and defeated by Arts, and Men, that it is not proper to mention? Has not an *East-India* Company been bestowed upon *Scotland*, the Fatality of which can never again be obviated, unless, as a *Quaker Merchant* advis'd the House of Lords, our Land-Admirals be sent thither to manage their *Naval* Business?

But I will proceed no farther upon this nice Point. I will not touch upon the denial of Passes to our Merchants to go into *France* when their *East-India* Ships were taken, and when they had made such a Bargain for them, with the French, as would have made them little or no Losers. I will not point out who of our Neighbours bought all the best Commodities of those Ships, nor at what Rate, nor to whom, they sold them. It is full time to come to our Treasure.

I will not mention those prodigious private Gifts that have exhausted it. I will omit the Order that was lately sent to pay to the E. of P. three and Twenty Thousand Pounds in Specie out of meer Bounty. It is not fit to particularize these things; because the Nation was at that time, and is still, so distressed for Money. But has it not been by reason of our *Land Armies* Abroad that so much of our Coin has, contrary both, to our Interest and our Laws, been transported? I remember the King desir'd the Parliament in one of his Speeches to consider of some way to prevent its Transportation, but I don't remember that they did much about it. Well! but has it not been with, at least, the connivance of the Treasury, Custom-House, and the Excise-Office that the little Money we had left was so adulterated and clipped? Could not those Gentlemen, of those Commissions at first, by denying to receive it for Taxes and Custom, have at once stopp'd the currency of all clipp'd and mix'd Coin? If our Coin had not been so spoiled could our Trade have had this Stagnation?

I could have enlarg'd upon these, and run into many more Particulars very proper for such a Request. I could have expos'd the Inconveniences and the Rogueries of the *Bank of England*, and the villanous practise of many great *Goldsmiths*, and several other sorts of Men who pretend to be Friends to the Government. I could have put down a Catalogue of pretious Men now in Office, and have shew'd that Places have made some pretending Patriots worse than those they complained of in other Reigns, and from these Heads I could yet have discovered some more of the genuine Causes of our Miseries, but I fear I have already written as much Truth as the World will bear. I have made it but too plain that it is in the Court, in the Councils, in the Treasury, at the Admiralty, the Excise-Office, and at the Custom-House, that these honest Citizens must find Objects worthy of their noble and well-intended Resentments. It is the Men in great Places, and they only, who could be, and (upon base, sinister, and selfish Designs) have been, great and successful Plotters against our Trade and Credit. Nor have they done it unawares; for many Years agoe, when the Clipping and Embasement of our Money appear'd more than usual, they were forewarn'd by some honest and understanding Men, both in and out of the House of Commons, what Calamities would ensue if they did not timely prevent those Abuses. That Petitions from the City may force a full Reformation in all those great Posts of Power, and may obtain all the necessary Laws that can strengthen our Constitution, and that thereby Trade and England may for ever Flourish, will I am sure be yours as it is the sincere wish of, Sir, Your most Obedient Humble Servant, J. W.